Old Earth Creation Science Belief Systems

In the table below I have tried to present the major belief systems related to the Christian understanding of the creation of the universe from an old earth perspective. By putting this information together in a single table, it is my hope that a person can compare and make informed choices about what he/she believes about the creation. While I recognize that there are many more systems that people use to understand creation, the ones below are the major systems. There are five old earth systems listed, all of which accept the findings of modern science concerning the age of the earth. Of the five, Progressive Creationism rejects the modern scientific theory of evolution, whereas the OEM Joint Theory leaves it up to the reader to accept or reject evolution. It should be noted that all theories are not "cut and dry." As with any theory, there are apparent problems, some of which I have noted. If someone is looking for ironclad proof of the existence of God, it cannot be found. If we were to prove the existence of God with scientific evidence, then people would have no choice but to believe, and there would be no need for faith. Proof of God resides in peoples hearts, not in scientific evidence.

As for sources, many are noted within the text via links. Information for Theistic Evolution (allegory) and Gap Theory are from an assortment of web sources. Information for Theistic Evolution (literal) are mainly from Glenn Morton's web pages. Information for Progressive Creationism is from Reasons to Believe (Hugh Ross) and Evidence for God from Science (Rich Deem). For more information on Progressive Creationism, I recommend Rich Deem's website, as the information is organized much better than Ross' website. And of course, OEM Joint Theory sources are from ideas presented on this website.

On the left side is the column labeled "Event in History". To the right, the five columns related to each belief system detail how these systems treat the specific event in history. One final note: as a Christian, I am not concerned over which system a reader believes in. The important thing is that a person recognize their need for Jesus Christ. As the great evangelist Billy Graham says, "I believe that God created man, and whether it came by an evolutionary process and at a certain point He took this person or being and made him a living soul or not, does not change the fact that God did create man. ... whichever way God did it makes no difference as to what man is and man's relationship to God."

Belief Systems▶ Event In History▼	**Theistic Evolution** (Allegorical)	**Theistic Evolution** (Literal)	**Progressive Creationism** (Literal)	**Gap Theory** (Literal)	**OEM Joint Theory** (Literal)
Overview	This view accepts that God used evolution to create life on earth, including mankind. **Part of the Genesis story is allegory, and may not represent actual historical people or events.** The findings of modern science are accepted. Proponents vary in their beliefs about God's involvement. Some believe he created the natural laws, and let evolution run its course, while others believe God was actively involved in the evolution process. Many people, including YEC and other OECs, point to many problems with evolution, and claim it could not be	This view accepts that God used evolution to create life on earth, including mankind. **The events in Genesis are understood to be literal, referring to actual people and events.** The findings of modern science are accepted. Proponents vary in their beliefs about God's involvement. Some believe he created the natural laws, and let evolution run its course, while others believe God was actively involved in the evolution process. Many people, including YEC and other OECs, point to many problems with evolution, and claim it	This view accepts that God created each species of plant and animal as a unique creation, **without the use of evolution**, and the days of creation refer to a long periods of time.	This theory (also called Ruin-Restoration)states there is a gap of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. There are two distinct creations. The first, billions of years old, accepts the modern scientific theories about the age of the earth. The second creation (Genesis 1:2-31) records the six 24-hour days of the second creation.	This view accepts that modern science is correct, and it should be used to understand God's creation. The days of creation refer to specific events, and the time frame necessary for those events to occur. In some cases, the days of creation overlap one another. The phrase "And the evening and the morning were the x day" refers to the fact that the events accomplished on this day had a definite beginning and ending, and does not refer to sunrise/sunset, or midnight. **One can fit either evolution or progressive creation within this**

	true. Evolution is a theory, and is constantly changing as new discoveries are made. TalkOrigins website contains many answers to the claims of YEC/OEC against evolution, and, with God involved in the evolutionary process, anything is possible.	could not be true. Evolution is a theory, and is constantly changing as new discoveries are made. TalkOrigins website contains many answers to the claims of YEC/OEC against evolution, and, with God involved in the evolutionary process, anything is possible.			**theory**. Since we don't know everything there is to know about creation and evolution, we should not be dogmatic about insisting that one or the other is the only correct vi

Day 1 of Creation	**Theistic Evolution** (Allegorical)	**Theistic Evolution** (Literal)	**Progressive Creationism** (Literal)	**Gap Theory** (Literal)	**OEM Joint Theory** (Literal)
[1] *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.* [2] *And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.* [3] *And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.* [4] *And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.* [5] *And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.*	God created the universe using the Big Bang, which created light from the stars. Planets formed from material surrounding stars. The earth coalesced from material, and was at first formless (without geologic features we see today, and without life. The planet's rotation, creating the periods of night and day, started. The creation narrative is written from the point of view of an observer standing on the surface of the earth. This is key to understanding the creation of the sun/moon on Day 4.	Same as Theistic Evolution (Allegorical)	Same as Theistic Evolution (Allegorical)	During day one, God created light, and the formless, void earth.	Same as Theistic Evolution (Allegorical). Day One concludes after the primordial earth is formed, approximately 4.5 billion years ago.

Day 2 of Creation *6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.* *7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.* *8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.*	**Theistic Evolution (Allegorical)** Day Two describes the start of the earth's water cycle and the formation of landforms/oceans through tectonic activity. God established laws of science that then created landforms (indirect), or God could have been directly involved in directing these land-building activities	**Theistic Evolution (Literal)** Same as TE (Allegorical)	**Progressive Creationism (Literal)** Day 2 describes the start of the earth's water cycle, and the formation of landforms/oceans through tectonic activity.	**Gap Theory (Literal)** During Day Two God started the earth's water cycle, and formed continents and oceans, all within a 24 hour period. Previously existing rock layers, from the previous creation, are left mostly intact. God simply arranged the land features as He desired prior to man's creation.	**OEM Joint Theory (Literal)** Day 2 describes the start of the earth's water cycle, and the formation of landforms/oceans through tectonic activity. Since landforms/oceans have continually changed since the formation of the earth 4.5 billion years ago, Day 2 overlaps with Days 3-6 of the creation narrative. Since the end of the creative acts of God, his natural laws that He set in place continue to change our planet's landscape.

Day 3 of Creation [9] *And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.* [10] *And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.* [11] *And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.* [12] *And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in*	**Theistic Evolution** (Allegorical) During this time, the tectonic activities continue, and the earth's plants started to evolve. Please note the wording in Gen. 1:11-12: "Let the earth bring forth…And the earth brought forth…" God commands the earth to do the creating. This is a clear indication of evolution.	**Theistic Evolution** (Literal) Same as TE (Allegorical)	**Progressive Creationism** (Literal) During this time, the tectonic activities continue, and God created the earth's plant life. According to Reasons to Believe's timechart, Day 3 started about 2 billion years ago, and ended about 700 million years ago. However, new plant species constantly appear in the fossil record after this point. It is unclear if Reasons to Believe thinks the days of creation overlap. It should also be noted that Hugh Ross states in his book *The Genesis Question* that "The text does not say that all land vegetation appeared at this time, but	**Gap Theory** (Literal) During this 24-hour period, God created all land plants.	**OEM Joint Theory** (Literal) Once the earth was stabilized, God started the process of creating plants. The first plants were cyanobacteria, (stromatolites), approximately 3.5 billion years ago. Over the past 3.5 billion years, new plant species appear in the fossil record, indicating that this creative period overlapped the remaining days of creation (Days 4-6). It does not matter whether God used evolution, or created plants from nothing. Either way fits and presents no theological problems.

itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. *[13] And the evening and the morning were the third day.*			emphasizes, rather, that God chose this time for dry land to abound with vegetation." (page 39). But the fossil record shows the first vascular land plants appear during the Late Ordovician 445 million years ago, well outside the time given for Day 3 on his website chart.		

Day 4 of Creation	**Theistic Evolution** (Allegorical)	**Theistic Evolution** (Literal)	**Progressive Creationism** (Literal)	**Gap Theory** (Literal)	**OEM Joint Theory** (Literal)
[14] *And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:* [15] *And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.* [16] *And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.* [17] *And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,* [18] *And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light*	During Day Four, the atmosphere of earth, which prior to his day had been clouded by debris and gasses, cleared to the point that the observer standing on the planet could see the sun, moon, and stars. During this day God worked at clearing the atmosphere, or he allowed the natural processes that He set in motion to clear the atmosphere. This day has a definite beginning and ending point, although one could argue that the atmosphere was constantly changing through geologic history, therefore the day overlapped with	Same as TE	Same as TE	Gap theory states that the sun and stars were very ancient, but perished about 12,000 years ago, then regenerated ("made") about 6,000 years ago during the days of the Genesis account. (Source)	Same as TE

from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. [19] *And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.*	all the days of creation.				

Day 5 of Creation [20] *And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.* [21] *And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.* [22] *And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.* [23] *And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.*	**Theistic Evolution** (Allegorical) During this day, sea creatures and birds evolved. Note the language of verse 20: "Let the waters bring forth..." In this language construction, the "waters" are doing the work, not God, although many TE's believe God was actively involved in the evolution process.	**Theistic Evolution** (Literal) Same as TE (Allegorical)	**Progressive Creationism** (Literal) During this day, God directly created sea creatures and birds. According to the timeline for Genesis 1 on reasons.org, this day started approximately at the beginning of the Cambrian Period, about 530 million years ago, and ended approximately 65 million years ago. However, new aquatic species appear after 65 Ma (whales, for example)	**Gap Theory** (Literal) During this day, God created all the sea creatures and birds	**OEM Joint Theory** (Literal) During this day, God created (directly, or through evolution) the sea creatures and birds. Defining the starting time for this day is difficult, due to the incomplete fossil record. While many people point to the Cambrian explosion for the beginning of sea life, there is fossil evidence prior to the Cambrian (Source). Birds, on the other hand, appear in the Mesozoic era, with many scientists claiming they evolved from theropod dinosaurs. As for timing, Day 5 begins with the first sea creatures (maybe 1 billion years ago) and continued right up to the end of Day 6, so the end of Day 5 overlapped Day 6.

Day 6 of Creation *24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.* *25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.* *26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that*	**Theistic Evolution (Allegorical)** During this day, land creatures evolved. Note verse 24 states, "Let the earth bring forth..." The earth is doing the work, not God. But God is responsible (verse 25, "And God made...", since God established the laws of nature that led to evolution. Some theistic evolutionists also believe God was directly involved in the evolutionary process. Man evolved from earlier hominids, and at some point, God imparted man with an eternal soul. In this view, God could have done this to a whole group of mankind, all over the globe, or he could have done it to	**Theistic Evolution (Literal)** During this day, land creatures evolved. Note verse 24 states, "Let the earth bring forth..." The earth is doing the work, not God. But God is responsible (verse 25, "And God made...", since God established the laws of nature that led to evolution. Some theistic evolutionists also believe God was directly involved in the evolutionary process. Man evolved from earlier hominids, and at some point, God imparted a single pair (Adam, Eve) with an eternal soul. Glenn Morton understands Adam and Eve to be either Australopithicenes, or	**Progressive Creationism (Literal)** God directly created the land animals, starting about 65 million years ago, and ending with the creation of man, about 50,000 years ago. The timing for Day 6 comes from the previously mentioned chart. However, the first land-living vertebrate animals appear in the Devonian, at least 350 million years ago. Also see Genesis 2 section below.	**Gap Theory (Literal)** God directly created land animals and mankind, in one 24-hour period. Also see Genesis 2 section below.	**OEM Joint Theory (Literal)** God created land animals, starting at least 350 million years ago. God's last creative act was to make mankind. For more discussion of mankind's creation, see the section on Genesis 2 below.

creepeth upon the earth. *27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.* *28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.* *29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed;*	only one pair (Adam, Eve). Also see Genesis 2 section below.	Homo Habilis, living before 5.5 million years ago (Source). Some may believe Adam and Eve are more modern, within the last 200,000 years. Also see Genesis 2 section below.			

to you it shall be for meat. *30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.* *31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.*					

Day 7 *2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. 2 By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.*	**Theistic Evolution, Progressive Creation, and OEM Joint Theory** God's day of rest continues from the end of creation through today. (Hebrews 4)	**Gap Theory (Literal)** God rested from his creative acts, with a 24-hour long day of

Genesis 2	**Theistic Evolution** (Allegorical) An allegorical view is one where Adam and Eve symbolize the large group of ancestors who lived 150,000 years ago. Yet another option is to view Genesis 2-4 as an "everyman" story, a parable of each person's individual rejection of God.	**Theistic Evolution (Lit.), Progressive Creationism, Gap Theory, OEM Joint Theory** Genesis 2 presents a more detailed account of the creation of man. It introduces us to the Garden of Eden, a special place created specifically for man, as a representation of paradise. God's creation was called "very good," indicating that it was good, and not "perfect." The Garden could be considered "perfect." Man could live here, with God, enjoying his fellowship, and as such, is a view of what heaven could be like. (If the whole creation were perfect, as YEC's claim, then there is no point in God creating a separate Garden to place man into.) One could say that while the Garden was perfect, life outside the Garden was "good." God created a functioning ecosystem, which included death, which is necessary for the renewal of life.

Fall of Man Genesis 3	**Theistic Evolution** (Allegorical) "Original sin often refers simply to the current state of humanity, in that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Evolution does not raise questions about our current state of sinfulness. It does, however, raise questions about how and when the first sin occurred, and how this fallen state was transmitted to all people. The sciences of evolution and archaeology can provide some insight into these questions but are not equipped to answer them. These questions are theological, and over the centuries the church has considered many possible answers. Some of these options are consistent with the scientific evidence currently available." (Source)	**Theistic Evolution** (Literal) Adam and Eve were created, stayed in the Garden an unspecified length of time, and then made a choice to sin, and were banned from the Garden of Eden. The timing of the fall is open to interpretation. Glenn Morton's system would require this to occur more than 5.5 million years ago, while many others would believe it happened during the last 200,000 years.	**Progressive Creationism** (Literal) Adam and Eve were created, stayed in the Garden an unspecified length of time, and then made a choice to sin, and were banned from the Garden of Eden. This happened about 50,000 years ago.	**Gap Theory** (Literal) Adam and Eve were created, stayed in the Garden an unspecified length of time, and then made a choice to sin, and were banned from the Garden of Eden.	**OEM Joint Theory** (Literal) Adam and Eve were created, stayed in the Garden an unspecified length of time, and then made a choice to sin, and were banned from the Garden of Eden. This happened about 50,000 years ago (if you accept Progressive Creationism) or up to 5.5 million years ago, depending on which version of Theistic Evolution you believe in

Genealogies of Genesis	**Theistic Evolution, Progressive Creationism, OEM Joint Theory** (Allegorical)	**Gap Theory (Literal)**
Genesis 5 Genesis 10 Genesis 11	There are demonstratable gaps in the genealogies. Where "x" begats "y", "x" may be the grandfather, great-grandfather, etc, of "y". This means that the exact dating method used by YEC's to date Adam's creation cannot be accurate. One source notes that Jesus is referred to as the "Son of Man", a reference to Adam. This skips all generations in between Adam and Jesus! Sources: Are there Gaps in the Biblical Genealogies (reasons.org) The Genesis Genealogies: Are They Complete? (godandscience.org)	The genealogies do not contain any gaps. The ages given in the Bible for the people in the genealogies can be added together, giving us an estimate for the precise dating of

Flood of Noah Genesis 6-9	**Theistic Evolution** (Allegorical) The scientific and historical evidence does not support a global flood, but is consistent with a catastrophic regional flood. Beyond its place in history, the Genesis flood teaches us about human depravity, faith, obedience, divine judgment, grace and mercy. (Source) Some believe the story is an exaggerated recollection of a small group of people who suffered from a flood event.	**Theistic Evolution** (Literal) The flood is considered to be a local flood. Glenn Morton proposes the flood may correspond to the filling of the Mediterranean basin approximately 5.5 million years ago. Some TE's may be uncomfortable with a flood that long ago. One may also believe the flood occurred much later, in the 200,000 to 5,000 years ago range, but no geologic evidence for an alternative flood location (other than the Black Sea flood) has been proposed.	**Progressive Creationism** (Literal) The flood is to be understood as being local, but universal in effect. From Noah's perspective, all life that Noah knew about before the flood was wiped out. From Noah's perspective on the ark, he could be in the middle of a local flood, and not see land anywhere. The statement that the waters prevailed over the earth to a depth of 15 cubits, was due to the draft of the ark being 15 cubits, so water had to be at least this deep to clear all landforms that were underwater.	**Gap Theory** (Literal) The flood of Noah was a global event. Because the Gap theory accepts the fossil record as being from millions of years ago, the fossil-bearing rocks were not deposited by the flood (Source). Some gap theory believers accept a local flood scenario (Source).	**OEM Joint Theory** (Literal) The flood is to be understood as being local, but universal in effect. From Noah's perspective, all life that Noah knew about before the flood was wiped out. From Noah's perspective on the ark, he could be in the middle of a local flood, and not see land anywhere. The statement that the waters prevailed over the earth to a depth of 15 cubits, was due to the draft of the ark being 15 cubits, so water had to be at least this deep to clear all landforms that were underwater. The most likely location of the local flood would be the Caspian Sea scenario.

Tower of Babel *Genesis 11:* *Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. 2 It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. 3 They said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly." And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. 4 They said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." 5 The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which*	**Theistic Evolution (Allegorical)** Prior to the development of modern languages, all languages are believed to have developed from a Proto-Human language, currently thought to be sometime between 50,000 to 200,000 years before present.	**Theistic Evolution (Literal)** Prior to the development of modern languages, all languages are believed to have developed from a Proto-Human language, currently thought to be sometime between 50,000 to 200,000 years before present. Glenn Morton notes that Homo Erectus fossils showed signs that they may have had speech capabilities (more than 2 million years ago) (Source) **(Source)**	**Progressive Creationism (Literal)** Unknown, but presumed to be the same as OEM Joint Theory. However, dating of the Tower would have to be less than 50,000 years ago, after the PC dating of Adam and Eve. (no sources found on PC websites)	**Gap Theory (Literal)** All languages derived directly from the confusion of the languages by God, several thousand years ago, as described in Genesis 11.	**OEM Joint Theory (Literal)** The Tower of Babel history is accepted as fact, but having occurred at least 100,000 years ago, but perhaps as long as 200,000. This event had to occur prior to the migration of peoples away from the Middle East. For example, aboriginies have been in Australia for 40,000 years, so it had to occur prior to this date. Mitochondrial DNA estimates migration happened "out of Africa," but we are only just beginning to understand this science, so it is not 100% certain that this is correct.

the sons of men had built. 6 The Lord said, “Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. 7 Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another’s speech.” 8 So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. 9 Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.					

Recent Biblical History	With Genesis 12 and the history of Abraham, all theories merge and believe in the Biblical histories, from about 2,400 B.C. to the present